

REGI News

Newsletter from the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development

VII Legislature N. 3 - 28 September 2009



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NEXT MEETING

5 OCTOBER 2009

15.00 - 18.30
PHS Hemicycle

6 OCTOBER 2009

9.00 - 12.30
JAN 6Q2

14.30 - 16.15
JDE 62 (CoR)

16.30 - 18.30
JAN 6Q2 (EP)

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[EP Library - Info on items related to regional development](#)

[OEIL - The Legislative Observatory](#)

[Regional Policy Inforegio](#)

[EUR-Lex](#)

[Committee of the Regions](#)

LAST MEETING (Brussels)

Wednesday
2 September 2009
15.00-18.30

Thursday
3 September 2009
9.00 - 12.30



**Dear Members,
Dear Readers,**

This ordinary meeting of the Committee on Regional Development will take place over three half days and its draft agenda is particularly busy. As is becoming customary every year, the committee "lends" part of its time for formal Opening of the European Week of Regions and Cities, the OPEN DAYS, which gathers in Brussels more than five thousand participants in Brussels.

The opening will take place in the Hemicycle and more than 800 participants have been invited. This year the theme of the OPEN DAYS is regional responses to the economic crisis.

In the framework of the OPEN DAYS, a joint workshop with the Commission for Territorial Cohesion of the Committee of the Regions is programmed. This year it will take place at the Committee of the Regions premises on Tuesday afternoon.

On Tuesday morning, the committee will hold an exchange of views with the Presidency and the European Commission on the important Baltic Sea Strategy and will listen to the Rapporteurs, Mr Van Nistelroij and Mr Kirilov, on the ongoing legislative process affecting the General and the ERDF Regulations.

The workshop on cohesion policy implementation with high-ranking DG REGIO officials, which is reserved for MEPs, and the presentation by the author, Mr Fabrizio Barca, of his report "An agenda for a reformed Cohesion Policy", should also be noted.

The coordinators will meet at the end of the first day's meeting. Among other business on the agenda is the important issue of deciding on the future Initiative reports

* * *

The aim of this Newsletter is to provide you with accurate and detailed information on the forthcoming REGI meeting. Part I provides you detailed information on every point in the draft agenda. Here you will find a brief description of the subject as well as, in particular, of the Rapporteur, shadow Rapporteur, timetable, procedure applicable, administrator responsible, etc

Part II of the weekly bulletin will be devoted to reviewing the main points of the previous committee meeting.

Part III is open to contributions from Members, political groups' advisers, assistants and other stakeholders. Conferences, seminars, and other events may also be announced be the subject of short reviews. The same goes for articles, press and book reviews.

Please send do not hesitate to send us your contribution.

The editorial deadline for those who want to contribute to PART III of the publication is eight days before the REGI meeting.

Miguel Tell Cremades
Secretary of the Committee

PART I

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI Committee meeting on 5 and 6 October 2009

The following items will be discussed as foreseen in the [draft agenda](#).

1. OPEN DAYS 2009 - European Week of Regions and Cities: Opening Session

5 October, 15:00-17:00, European Parliament, Hemicycle

The 2009 OPEN DAYS Opening Session will take place on Monday 5 October, 15:00-17:00, in the EP's Hemicycle. It will coincide with the CoR Plenary Session and the EP's REGI Committee meeting. In addition to the CoR and the REGI members, up to 700 representatives of OPEN DAYS partners could be accommodated in the Hemicycle.

Following a welcome and formal opening by the Chair of the committee, the session will begin with two keynote speeches by President José Manuel Barroso and Maud Olofsson, Deputy Prime Minister representing the Swedish Presidency.

During the second part, a panel debate of one hour will be held on the theme "Global crisis, regional responses?" with the participation of the President of the Basque Country, Patxi López Álvarez, Helma Orosz, Mayor of Dresden, the President of the Committee of the Regions, Luc Van den Brande, Regional Policy Commissioner Paweł Samecki and Danuta Hübner, Chair of the REGI committee. The debate will be moderated by Jacki Davis, European Policy Centre.

The session will be closed by Ms Hübner.

Indicative Programme

- 15:00-15:05 Opening of the session
Danuta Hübner, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development (REGI)
- 15:05-15:25 Welcome addresses
Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions
Paweł Samecki, Commissioner for regional policy
- 15:25-15:55 Keynote speeches
José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission
Maud Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy, Deputy Prime Minister, representing the Swedish Presidency
- 15:55-16:55 Panel & debate on "Global crisis, regional responses?" moderated by
Jacki Davis, European Policy Centre.
Participants:
Patxi López Álvarez, President of the Basque Country
Helma Orosz, Mayor of Dresden
Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions
Paweł Samecki, Commissioner for Regional Policy
Danuta Hübner, Chairwoman of the Committee on Regional Development

16:55-17:00 Closing

Closing remarks by **Danuta Hübner**, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development

2. Chairwoman's announcements

The announcements of the Chair will most probably take place on the 6th October.

3. Reduced rates of excise duty in Madeira and the Azores

In June 2008, Portugal requested the prolongation of the authorisation granted by the Council in 2002 to apply a reduction in the excise duty in the autonomous region of Madeira and the autonomous region of the Azores. Similar exceptions exist for other ultra peripheral regions of the Union.

In its explanatory notice the European Commission explains the reasons why these exceptions to the general duty rate are permissible. It also explains the very local economic impact of these measures which do not distort the single market.

The Commission proposal to renew the possibility for Portugal to apply exceptional rates of excise duty for locally produced alcohol products in Madeira and the Azores is uncontroversial.

In view of the noncontroversial nature of this proposal the EPP group has proposed that the dossier be dealt with under the provisions of Article 46 of the Rules of procedure. So far no other political group has opposed the adoption of this procedure which may be presented by the Chair.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Elie Hoarau	Consideration of draft report: 5/6 October 2009
Responsible administrator: Christian Chopin	Planned deadline for Ams: 10 October 2009
Procedure 2009/0075(CNS)	Planned adoption REGI: 3 November 2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: by December 2009

4. Eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities

This proposal follows the European Parliament and Council repeated requests for the EU to take measures to combat social inclusion, including the particular situation of Roma.

This proposal aims to permit the ERDF financial support for housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities living in the Member States that acceded to the European Union on or after 1 May 2004. In the new Member States, the great majority of these communities live in rural areas and in shelters (in rural as well as in urban areas) and they cannot benefit from the ERDF support, as the current legislation do not permit housing interventions outside the urban areas or the replacement of existing shelters by houses in favour of marginalised communities living in new Member States.

This proposal met a large consensus in the Working Party on Structural Measures of the Council, which made only minor changes to the initial text.

Consequently, taking into consideration the context and the urgency of the matter, since marginalised populations are indubitably the most affected by the current economic crisis, the

Rapporteur decided to take on board all the amendments proposed by the Council and not to present any new amendments or additions to the text.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Lambert Van Nistelrooij (EPP)	Consideration of draft report: 5/6 October 2009
Responsible administrator: Agnieszka Kunat	Planned deadline for Ams: mid October 2009
Procedure 2009/0105(COD)	Planned adoption REGI: 3/4 November 2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: December 2009

5. General provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund as regards simplification of certain requirements and as regards certain provisions relating to financial management

On 3 September the General Director of DG Regio, Mr. Dirk Ahner, appeared in front of the REGI Committee to illustrate the background and contents of the new proposals modifying the General and the ERDF regulations of the Structural funds adopted on 22 July by the European Commission.

As regards the modifications to the General Regulation, Mr. Ahner highlighted that they aim to simplifying the rules of accession to and of management of Community funds both at Programme and at project level.

Besides, a new provision under art. 77 is added aiming at temporarily increasing up to 100% the reimbursement for ESF projects in the Member States that so decide, under the condition of counterbalancing their cofinancing quota after 2010.

Since the Council has not found an agreement on art. 77 yet, no formal procedure has been opened in the Committee by now.

However, the rapporteur already appointed, M. Kirilov, ensured M. Anher on the full cooperation of the REGI Committee in completing the procedure.

He highlighted how the proposed changes on simplification go very much in the sense auspicated in several reports by the Parliament in the past of reducing the administrative burden for project carriers.

A second exchange of views without document will take place on 6 October in order for the rapporteur to inform the Members on the state of play and for the political groups to present their positions.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Evgeni Kirilov	First exchange of views: 3 September 2009
Responsible administrator: Elisa Daffarra	Second exchange of views without doc: 6 October 2009
Procedure 2009/0107(AVC)	Consideration of draft report: 3/4 November 2009 (tbc)
	Planned deadline for Ams:
	Planned adoption REGI: 2/3 December 2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: January 2010

6. Exchange of views with Ms Cecilia Malmström, Minister for European Union Affairs acting as President-in-Office of Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and with Mr Pawel Samecki, Commissioner on Regional Policy, on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The Communication on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region adopted by the Commission (10.06.2009) has the main objective of promoting a more balanced development of the Baltic Sea region. The Strategy is unique compared to previous regional policy initiatives, as it is the first time that the EU has developed a strategy that will be implemented on a macro regional level.

The four key challenges the Strategy tries to tackle are the following:

1. To enable a sustainable environment;
2. To enhance the region's prosperity;
3. To increase accessibility and attractiveness;
4. To ensure safety and security in the region.

With the view to the Strategy scheduled for being on the agenda of the European Council (29-30 October 2009), the Committee on Regional Development will hold an exchange of views on the subject with the Commission and the Swedish Presidency on 6 October at 10:00.

It was decided at the last meeting of the committee, on coordinators proposal, that a letter might be sent to the Presidency after the debate.

7. Workshop on EU Cohesion Policy

Presented by European Commission Directorate-General on Regional Policy

As it was the case at the beginning of the VI legislature, we have asked the Directorate general for Regional Policy of the European Commission, DG REGIO, to prepare a workshop on cohesion policy. This seminar will address in detail most relevant issues related to the cohesion policy issues. In particular it will look into the fundamentals of the current programming period and its evaluation, the responsibilities of MS and EC in which respect the implementation of cohesion policy and issues related to implementation, evaluation and audit of cohesion in regional programmes and projects.

This workshop is strictly reserved for Members of the Committee.

8. OPEN DAYS 2009: COTER/REGI Workshop on "The present and future benefits of Cohesion Policy - today and in future"

6 October, 14:30 - 16:15, Committee of the Regions, JDE 062

During the Open Days 2008, a REGI-COTER meeting has been organised in the European Parliament, with a wide participation of the public.

This meeting follows the same logic and is intended to provide a good opportunity for participants of the Open Days to meet and discuss with Members of the European Parliament and elected politicians from local and regional authorities.

This workshop will look at the past achievements of cohesion policy, namely, how cohesion policy has helped to overcome social and economic disparities in Europe. But more importantly, it will also discuss the indirect effects and less visible benefits of cohesion policy in terms of capacity building or internal market dynamics, thereby going beyond a mere

discussion on net returns. Furthermore, and with a view to the future, this workshop will consider recent contributions from academia, policy makers and stakeholders to the debate on the future of cohesion policy. The aim is to assess which benefits may be expected from a reformed cohesion policy and what would be its impact on European regions and the EU as a whole.

After the two key-note speeches by Ms Hübner, Chair of the REGI Committee and Mr Schneider, Chair of COTER, the floor will be given to MEPs, Members of COTER and the public for an interactive debate.

Agenda

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 14:30 – 14:35 | Welcome by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Michael Schneider</i>, Chairman of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion (COTER) of the Committee of the Regions• <i>Danuta Hübner</i>, Chairwoman of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) of the European Parliament |
| 14:35 - 14:45 | Regional development at work: policy lessons from two decades of cohesion policies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Michael Schneider</i> |
| 14:45 – 14:55 | The challenges of Cohesion Policy from the perspective of the European Parliament <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Danuta Hübner</i> |
| 14:55 – 15.15 | Interventions by Members of the COTER and MEPs of the REGI Committee |
| 15:15 – 16:00 | Open Discussion with interventions of participants in the seminar¹ |
| 16:00 – 16:15 | Conclusions of the debate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Danuta Hübner</i>• <i>Michael Schneider</i> |

9. European Year of Volunteering (2011)

The purpose of the proposal presented by the Commission is to designate the year 2011 to be the "**European Year of Volunteering**". The European Year shall encourage and support — through the exchange of experience and good practices — the efforts of the Member States, local and regional authorities as well as civil society to create the conditions conducive to volunteering in the European Union.

The objectives of the European year outlined in the proposal are the following:

- working towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU,
- empowering volunteer organisations and improving the quality of volunteering,
- rewarding and recognising volunteering activities,

¹ Participants wishing to take the floor are requested to fill the form distributed in the room and give it to the ushers

- raising awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

This legislative opinion is subject to the consultation procedure with CULT being the lead committee. The rapporteur as well as the timetable of CULT will be confirmed 5 October 2009. The exchange of views in REGI will be followed the consideration of the draft opinion in November with a view to vote at the REGI meeting in December.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Draftsperson: Karima Delli	Exchange of views: 06/10/2009
Lead Committee: CULT	Consideration of draft opinion: 3-4/11/2009 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Diana Haase	Planned deadline for Ams: ../11/2009 (tbc)
Procedure 2009/0072(CNS)	Planned adoption REGI: 2-3/12/2009 (tbc)
	Planned adoption in plenary: ../../2010 (tbc)

10. Barca Report: an agenda for a reformed Cohesion Policy

Presentation by the author, Mr Fabrizio Barca, of the independent report prepared at the request of the Commissioner for Regional Policy

In the context of the ongoing debate on the future of cohesion policy, the European Commission's DG REGIO has requested Dr. Fabrizio Barca (Director General, Ministry of Economy & Finance, Italy) to prepare an independent report assessing the effectiveness of cohesion policy to date and formulating a series of proposals on how to reform cohesion policy for the period post 2013.

To do this, Mr. Barca has organised eight hearings and seminars with academic experts and policy makers. The results of these discussions have been added to ten working papers prepared for the report and to a review of the economic literature as well as empirical evidence and served as the basis for drawing up the findings of the report.

The report provides many interesting ideas for the ongoing debate on future cohesion policy. It discusses the economic rationale and motivation of an EU place based development policy and provides an assessment of EU cohesion policy. In addition it identifies a limited number of core priorities on which to focus cohesion policy. Finally, it presents recommendations on key pillars of cohesion policy governance pinpointed for reform.

During the next REGI meeting, Mr Barca will present his report and engage in a debate with Members of the REGI Committee.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 3 November 2009** from 15.00 to 18.30 and on **Wednesday 4 November 2009** from 9.00 to 12.30 in Brussels.

PART II

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 2 and 3 September 2009

1. Exchange of views with Mr Samecki, Commissioner-Designate for Regional Policy

With a view to replace Commissioner Hübner and in line with the procedure established by the Conference of Presidents on 9 July, the Commissioner designated appeared before the REGI committee for an exchange of views with MEPs.

Members questioned Mr Samecki about the measures foreseen to react to the effects of the economic crisis, about the ongoing simplification of the regulations on structural funds and about the need to cut the red tape versus the requests for more control by the Court of Auditors, putting on the table the question of the better management of structural fund and effective use of available resources.

Members asked also about the state of the debate the future of cohesion policy, underlining different aspects: the lisbonisation of the cohesion policy, the definition of the territorial cohesion, the reaction to the climate change, the specific situation of ultra peripheral and disadvantaged regions.

Mr Samecki agreed on the need to take action to counter the effects of the crisis without forgetting however the need for a long term planning.

He expressed his view that cohesion policy should become an instrument to modernise the economies to react to strong competitive challenges without forgetting however the solidarity objective. This should lead to opening a new phase not only in the cohesion policy but also in the Lisbon Strategy.

Members formulated two strong requests to the Commission: to involve the European Parliament in the working group on the future of cohesion policy which is being organised and to take action in favour of reopening the dossier on the European Solidarity Fund which is blocked for over three years now at the Council.

2. Exchange of views with Ms Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy and Deputy Prime Minister and President in office of the Council

Ms Olofsson introduced the priorities of the Swedish Presidency for the current semester in the field of cohesion policy:

- debate on the future and on the simplification of cohesion policy as well as on territorial cohesion,
- urban development,
- the Baltic Sea Strategy.

The debate that followed was mainly concentrated on the Baltic Sea Strategy as the example for a new way of cooperating and distributing the structural funds between the regions.

Members asked also Ms Olofsson more specific questions about the state of debate on the simplification proposals and the European Solidarity Fund blockage at the Council.

3. Exchange of views (without documents)

- **Proposal for a Council regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the**

European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund concerning certain provisions relating to financial management - AVC

Rapporteur: Evgeni Kirilov (SD)

- **Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of energy efficiency and renewable energy investments in housing - COD**

Rapporteur: Lambert Van Nistelrooij (EPP)

4. The following vote took place:

- **Opinion on the 2010 Budget: Section III - Commission**

Draftsperson: Danuta Hübner, Chair (EPP)

The opinion was adopted by 37 votes in favour, 2 against and 5 abstentions.

5. The Committee endorsed the following proposals of the coordinators

- **Allocation of reports**

- Proposal for Council decision authorising Portugal to apply reduced rates of excise duty in the autonomous region of Madeira on locally produced and consumed rum and liqueurs and in the autonomous region of the Azores on locally produced and consumed liqueurs and eaux-de-vie Proposition (COM(2009)0259 final - 2009/0075 (CNS))

The report on this decision was allocated to the GUE group.

- Proposal of the European Commission amending the General regulation of Structural Funds

The report on this proposal was allocated to the SD Group

- Proposal of the European Commission amending the ERDF

The report on this proposal should be allocated to the EPP group.

- **Allocation of opinions**

- The 2010 budget opinion

The Chair should be the draftsperson for this opinion.

- Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund (COM(2009)0308 - 2009/2048(BUD))

It has been agreed that a letter should be sent to the committee on Budgets approving the assistance proposed.

- Proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of Volunteering (2011) - (COM(2009)0254 - 2009/0072(CNS))

The opinion on this Council Decision should be allocated to the Green Group.

- **Pending issues from the VI Legislature and priorities for the VII Legislature**

The coordinators proposed that at the REGI meeting on 3 September a letter on the pending issues to the Conference of Presidents should be adopted before the end of

September. If not, the coordinators will take a decision through written procedure.

- **Hearing of the new Commissioner**

The exchange of views to be held during the meeting will be followed by an evaluation by the coordinators that will be summarised in a letter by the Committee Chair to the President.

PART III - Other News

Here you will find the latest news related to Committee activities and cohesion policy issues

Delegation to Madeira

The Committee in its meeting in September decided to send a delegation to Madeira, Portugal. The purpose of visiting Madeira is to evaluate on the ground the effects of Structural Funds implementation and the difficulties encountered by outermost regions, with a view to the strengthening of the provisions relating to the outermost regions by the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 107(3)(a)TFEU).

The delegation will take place the 26-28 October 2009 with the participation of the following members:

Mr Georgios STAVRAKAKIS (S-D, EL), 1st Vice-Chair of the REGI Committee and Chair of the delegation

Mr Jan OLBRYCHT (EPP, PL)

Mr Petru Constantin LUHAN (EPP, RO)

Mr Tamás DEUTSCH (EPP, HU)

Ms Karin KADENBACH (S-D, AT)

Mr Michael THEURER (ALDE, DE)

Library News

Publications

Regional studies / Regional Studies Association



Regional Studies is an international journal in theoretical development, empirical analysis and policy debate in the multi- and inter-disciplinary field of regional studies. It contains: high-quality research, critical surveys, policy debates and special thematic issues. (Available in the Library - see catalogue entry [here](#))

Selected articles from vol. 43, no. 8, June 2009:

✚ **Is Regional Growth in Italy Endogenous?** / by Matteo Lanzafame, p. 1001-1014 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

✚ **Service Competitiveness and Urban Innovation Policies in the UK: The Implications of the 'London Paradox'** / by Peter Wood, p. 1047-1060 ([full text](#) -

click on IP authentication)

✚ **Spatial Mobility, Workers and Jobs: Perspectives from the Northern Ireland Experience** / by Ian Shuttleworth and Anne Green, p. 1105 - 1115 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

European urban and regional studies / Harlow, Essex, England \$b Longman Group, Vol. 16, no. 4, October 2009

European Urban and Regional Studies focuses on urban and regional development in Europe. It offers a European coverage and explores the ways in which space makes a difference to the social, economic, political and cultural map of Europe; highlight the connections between theoretical analysis and policy development; and place changes in global context. (Available in the Library - see catalogue entry [here](#))

Selected articles:

✚ **Urban-Rural Flows and the Meaning of Borders: Functional and Symbolic Integration in Norwegian City-Regions** / by Knut Hidle, Arild Aurvåg Farsund, and Hans Kjetil Lysgård, p. 409 - 422 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

✚ **The Spatial Distribution of Internet Backbone Networks in Europe: A Metropolitan Knowledge Economy Perspective** / by Emmanouil Tranos and Andy Gillespie, p. 423 - 438 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)



The annals of regional science / Western Regional Science Association, no. 3, September 2009



The Annals of Regional Science presents high-quality research in regional economics, resource management, location theory, urban and regional planning, transportation and communication, human geography, population distribution and environmental quality. (Available in the Library - see catalogue entry [here](#))

This special issue focus on 'Embedding network analysis in spatial studies of innovation', as in the following selected articles:

✚ **Network central: regional positioning for innovative advantage** / by Edward M. Bergman and Gunther Maier, p. 615-644 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

✚ **Knowledge flows across European regions** / by Raffaele Paci and Stefano Usai, p. 669-690 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

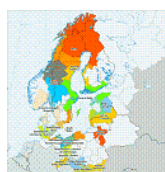
New Europe's old regions / by Piotr Zientara, Institute of Economic Affairs (Great Britain), 2009. 106 p.

Despite recent reform, New and Old Europe are marked by huge differences in income levels. As the author shows, particular regions within New Europe have very low productivity, low employment and very low growth. The differences in income levels between EU regions are stark. The income level of the richest EU region is over twelve times the level of that of the poorest. Even ignoring the extremes, which are distorted by special factors, income differences of over threefold between richer and poorer regions are common.

(Available in the Library - see catalogue entry [here](#))

Information files

EP Library prepares thematic files on specific topics related to the EP activity which contains links to selected documents of European institutions, as well as to other documents from stakeholders concerning that topic.



EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea / EP Library, last update September 2009

In order to address the urgent environmental challenges related to the Baltic Sea and taking into consideration that the Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, the European Council invited the European Commission (in December 2007) to present an EU

strategy for the Baltic Sea region. The aim of the Strategy will be to coordinate the efforts of various actors in the Region (Member States, regions, financing institutions, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, non-governmental bodies etc.) for promoting a more balanced development of the Region by working together. (Available on the Library website - see the [information file](#))



The Role of Volunteering in Contributing to Economic and Social Cohesion / EP Library, last update September 2009

It is estimated that in the EU. 15 between one third and a half of the population are involved in some type of voluntary activity, and while numbers and types of activity vary in different countries there are in excess of 100 million citizens engaged in voluntary activity in the EU 27. (Available on the Library website - see the [information file](#))

Latest analysis

An EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: Good Intentions Meet Complex Challenges / by Rikard Bengtsson, European Policy Analysis, Issue 9, September 2009

In this European Policy Analysis, Assistant Professor Rikard Bengtsson introduces the content and procedures of the strategy and identifies a number of challenges that need to be addressed. These challenges range from difficulties in improving efficiency to problems related to the intra-regionalization of the EU and the lack of an external perspective, more specifically by ignoring Russia as a key determinant for the potential success of the strategy. (Available on the Library website - see [latest analyses](#))

How Does EU Cohesion Policy Work? Evaluating its Effects on Fiscal Outcome Variables / by Tobias Hagen and Philipp Mohl, ZEW Discussion Paper No. 09-051.

"The impact of the EU Cohesion Policy has mainly been evaluated by analysing its growth effects. However, this perspective neglects that the EU support might affect other policy fields as well. According to the principle of additionality the Member States have to co-finance EU-funded projects but must not crowd out spending for national public investments elsewhere. Since a major part of Cohesion Policy payments is spent on government investments, virtually all empirical studies on the investigation of the growth effects assume that the Cohesion Policy increases investments leading to a higher steady-state capital stock per capita, which, in turn, increases the GDP growth rate." (Available on the Library website - see [latest analyses](#))

Studies

[Examining the Impact of European Regional Policy](#)

Author : [Institute for World Economics \(IWE - Hungary\)](#)

More details are available at:

<http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home/PartnerPosts/tabid/671/PostID/719/ExaminingtheImpactofEuropeanRegionalPolicy.aspx>

Other events

[Implications for the regions of emerging macro-regions](#)

On 22 September Agence Europe published a reference to the meeting of the political bureau of the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which coincided with the Ministerial conference, of 17

and 18 September in Göteborg, devoted to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy.

The new concept of macro regions and the questions and uncertainties around it gave fuelled a fruitful debate about the role of macro regions, and the expectations of regions towards them. According to Professor Esko Antola of the Centrum Balticum (Turku, Finland) macroregions are set up of administrative regions that have sufficient issues in common to justify a common approach.

Based on the experience with the drawing up of the Baltic Sea Strategy, two new macro region areas were mentioned: North Sea and the Black Sea area. It was announced that early next year AER intends to bring together 33 regions of the Black Sea to discuss water management and tourism development issues.

Read more:

Agence Europe 22/09/2009:

<http://www.library.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/lis/site/newsContent.form?src=3&agId=14&id=24482&fileName=aeen0922.htm#tag21>

Assembly for European Regions:

www.aer.eu

European institutions' support for Swedish Presidency macro-regional strategy projects

On 19 September Agence Europe published a reference to the ministerial conference on the EU Baltic Sea Strategy in Stockholm 17-18 September 2009. The meeting clearly showed that the EU institutions along with the European Investment Bank support macro regional strategies, and in particular the Baltic Sea and Danube Region strategies.

The Swedish Prime Minister and European Council President stated that the European Baltic Sea Strategy was an innovative instruments enabling better coordination of efforts made by Member States. He stressed the importance of partnership with regional stakeholders and organisations.

The Commissioner for Regional Policy, Pawel Samecki raised three points for further discussion: whether it is possible to apply the macro regional approach throughout the EU, whether the approach should cover all policy areas and finally whether significant EU funding should be targeted at macro regional level, e.g. via the European territorial cooperation objective. The Commissioner also outlined the next steps to be taken, namely starting to implement the Baltic Sea Strategy, advancing the preparation of the Danube region Strategy and analyse the possibilities of wider application of the concept.

Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK), Vice-President of the EP took the floor and highlighted two issues: the efforts made on macro regional level should be supported by European instruments and the EP should receive regular reports on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Read more:

<http://www.library.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/lis/site/newsContent.form?src=3&agId=14&id=24475&fileName=aeen0919.htm#tag22>

News from:



(European Spatial Planning Observation Network)

ESPON is set up to support policy development and to build a European scientific community in the field of territorial development. The main aim is to increase the general body of knowledge about territorial structures, trends and policy impacts in an enlarged European Union.

Please find details about the Launch of the next ESPON Calls and the ESPON Info Day are available at the ESPON Website (link: www.espon.eu), at Inforegio Website (link: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm) and at the EC Pressroom RAPID (link: [MEMO/09/359](http://ec.europa.eu/rapid/)).